Bay-Delta Sport Fishing Enhancement Stamp Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
October 30, 2007, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Headquarters

<u>Attendees</u>

Jim Crenshaw, Committee Chair John Beuttler, Committee Ken Jones, Committee John Ryzanych, Committee Jim Edgar, Committee Bob Strickland, Committee

Terry Foreman, DFG Kyle Murphy, DFG Heather McIntire, DFG Karen Mitchell, DFG

Mike Reihl, BBAC John Banks, CSBA Whitey Rassmussen, CSBA Jackson Chapman, CSBA Dan Odenweller, Presenter

Public Comment

Mike Riehl announced that the Black Bass Action Committee is hosting a fundraiser for the Boy Scouts of America on January 5, 2008.

Minutes

John Beuttler – Correction, Page 6, third paragraph from the bottom. Change to "We have probably lost 8 **billion** over the last **twenty** years."

Dan Odenweller – There are two versions of the Meyer Report. The one with the blue cover includes numbers from DWR; the report with the salmon colored cover has Phil's original numbers (this is the one we want).

MOTION: Ken Jones motioned to approve the July 12, 2007 meeting minutes.

Seconded: John Ryzanych

The July 12, 2007 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

<u>Striped Bass in the San Francisco Bay Estuary</u> (Presentation by Dan Odenweller)

Dan is a retired CDFG fisheries biologist. Dan presented data from two surveys. the summer townet survey and fall midwater trawl survey. From 1996 to 2000, the data show a decline to record low abundance of young of the year striped bass in the Bay-Delta; while, during the same time period, there was an increase in abundance of adult striped bass. Dan questions where the recruits came from; CALFED actions or some other source. Dan speculates that the increase in recruits from 1996 to 2000 came from the Striped Bass Supplementation Program. The Supplementation Program involved both hatcheries and pen rearing of salvaged fish from the export facility fish screens. In 1993, the Supplementation Program was suspended and releases were reduced to zero for one year. The program was slowly restored and then terminated in 2002. In 2000, there was a downturn in the numbers of adult striped bass. Dan questions if this downturn was the result of the suspension of the Supplementation Program back in 1993. He also questions if we will see a similar downturn in the striped bass population in 2009 or 2010 (seven years following the termination of the program). Dan predicts that the striped bass population will crash around the year 2012.

Jim Crenshaw – Why would the striped bass population increase if all the forage fish are declining?

John Beuttler – When they were stocking striped bass, there was no answer as to why the fishery doubled.

Dan Odenweller – Inland silversides eat delta smelt eggs and that predation may have impacts on the delta smelt populations.

Ken Jones – When we first started this committee, it was the start of the decline of the Delta. How close is the Department to knowing the cause? How can they respond when they don't know the cause?

Jim Edgar – We are charged with the Bay-Delta region and to identify things that will make a difference in the future. We are nagged at that we might need to take a bigger broader approach to deal with these big picture issues.

Terry Foreman – I do not know if we have that amount of money, but we might be able to leverage it.

Jim Edgar – We have a large amount of money. Are we dealing with the central issues? We need to instead of piece-mealing.

Dan Odenweller – You could supplement the striped bass project in Stockton.

Action Item: Send the Committee a copy of Dan Odenweller's presentation.

 Action Item: Send the Committee the agenda for the Interagency Ecological Program's 2008 Annual Workshop.

Action Log

85 – *Invite Dan Odenweller to discuss his striped bass work.* Dan will be giving his presentation at today's meeting.

97 – The Committee will discuss the role and necessity of a fisheries consultant.

 ACTION ITEM: Karen Mitchell will provide the Committee information on issues being addressed at Bay-Delta science and policy meetings.

John Beuttler – If the Science Advisory Committee narrows POD issues down to one or two things, we need to provide that information to the Committee. We need background information and we need to understand/know the information points.

Terry Foreman – We will test this for the next three meetings.

116 – Have someone come speak to the Committee about the viability of a striped bass hatchery and if it would help the striped bass population.

 ACTION ITEM: The Department will ask Marty Gingras to provide a writeup on the viability of a striped bass hatchery for the next meeting.

126 – Find out what current striped bass mitigation is being used for the 4 Pumps Agreement.

Why did they accept this as mitigation? DBEEP helps reduce poaching in the Delta, but how do we calculate this? Do we get the mitigations that off-sets the impacts of the pumps? DWR used to purchase fish for the grow-out projects. That was mitigation. You got fish for fish. How can we consider enforcement as mitigation? What is the current mitigation and how are they spending it? DWR prepares an annual report and a report for each meeting. The annual report gives you the information you are looking for.

- ACTION ITEM: Change Item 126 and get a copy of the annual report from DWR for the Committee.
- ACTION ITEM: Ask Fred Jurick (DFG) to explain how DBEEP calculations were made and report back to the Committee.

Economic Analysis of Striped Bass, Steelhead & Salmon Fishing in California

John Beuttler – The original proposal looks at the Central Valley tributaries to the estuary. It wasn't looking at the whole state. I suggest that we amend the proposal title to Bay-Delta Estuary to narrow the geographic range. The analysis should encompass the full geographic range of the stamp. From that, we may be able to extrapolate for the state.

John Ryzanych – If we do focus on just the geographic range of the stamp, does it still provide us with something of value?

John Beuttler – Absolutely. We already have one study done 25 years ago and it focused on the Central Valley. This report will put a value on the fishery, commercial and recreational. This will update the information created 25 years ago. Marty has handled this for the Department.

John Ryzanych – Make this more scientific. Maybe there can be a secondary focus on Bay-Delta region.

Ken Jones – Is the data we're going to get out of this report worth \$400,000?

Jim Edgar – Is the commercial and sport fishing in the ocean and Bay considered?

Do you want to include additional species in this report (e.g., black bass and halibut)?

John Beuttler – The Meyer Report only covered striped bass, Chinook salmon, and steelhead.

Jim Crenshaw – The cost is going to go up exponentially if we include all these other species.

John Beuttler – These are the ones that are in trouble (i.e., Chinook salmon, steelhead, and stripers).

Jim Edgar – Find out how much it would cost to do the original proposed project with just the three species and also find out the cost of the extra species (e.g., black bass, halibut, and sturgeon). Clarify that the economic analysis considers the economic impact of the ocean salmon fishery.

 ACTION ITEM: Include on the January agenda this topic for discussion, specifically: (1) get updated budget for the original proposal; (2) clarify the geographic range of the proposed project; (3) get the cost to add black bass, halibut, and sturgeon; and (4) clarify that the analysis includes the economic value of the ocean fisheries.

Sturgeon Punch Card Proposal

Discussion – W. Rassmussen stated that at the Rio Vista Derby all sturgeon that came in had tags, except two. The punch card seems to be working.

MOTION: Ken Jones motioned to approve the Sturgeon Punch Card Proposal.

Seconded: Jim Crenshaw

The Committee unanimously approved the proposal.

Striped Bass Fisheries Management Plan Proposal

John Beuttler – We just heard how expensive it is to hire a consultant and that this may cost \$1 million or more. This was done as part of the Section 10 Permit criterion. We may not be able to salvage the Section 10 and the 1989 management plan. So, I raised the issue at the last meeting; can we consider having DFG staff do this instead of a consultant?

Terry Foreman – One of the things I am concerned about is that we just got sued again and we are being charged with violations of the ESA. We are not going to cease managing stripers. We may be just a little premature on this. I want a few more steps down the road before we do this. I don't understand why the SBSF isn't paying for a large portion or all of this. It is similar to the economic analysis report. I think we are a little premature on this.

John Beuttler – I too think that a management plan could be produced that is more bullet proof that the one we have now. It is one thing to write the plan, but we also have to implement the plan. I would have greater confidence if the Department were to do this since they have to implement this project.

Terry Foreman – We need an answer as to whether or not we would do this.

Jim Edgar – I would have a hard time approving this when the SBSF Committee has money.

 ACTION ITEM: The Department will determine if now is the right time to pursue a new striped bass management plan and, if so, if it is feasible for the Department to write it.

Salmon Acclimation Proposal

Ken Jones – Have the past issues been resolved?

Heather McIntire – Yes, and it's included in the RFP.

MOTION: Jim Edgar motioned to approve the Salmon Acclimation Proposal.

Seconded: Ken Jones.

The Committee unanimously approved the Salmon Acclimation Proposal.

Proposal Solicitation Notice (Karen Mitchell, DFG)

Karen Mitchell – The Fisheries Branch forwarded the recommendations of the Technical Review Team and the BDSFES Advisory Committee to the Acting Director. The Acting Director decided that the BDSFES Program will fund the two access projects; the South Bonnyview Boating and Fishing Access Improvements project on the Sacramento River and the Upper Sunrise Boat Launch Facilities Improvements project on the lower American River.

Heather McIntire – At the last Fisheries Management Committee meeting, we asked regional managers what issues are in the regions and they said that the number one issue is access.

Terry Foreman – The Acting Director and the Branch Chief feel we need to spend this money. These projects are a good bang for the buck.

 ACTION ITEM: On financial reports, put an asterisk next to the projects that the Committee has recommended **not** funding.

Ken Jones – We should write a letter to the Director about this and let him know we're not happy.

John Beuttler – Sounds to me like Terry said the right things about why the decision was made. The Director will always need the latitude to make a decision. We tried in the past to get a mediation packet. They just want us to make recommendations.

Ken Jones – When we make recommendations they should be given more consideration.

Terry Foreman – I understand why you are frustrated. We know that people will get a bang for their buck from these projects. We were told that we will go forward with these projects. We know that the other things we looked at had fatal flaws. You made it perfectly clear that access projects were not your priority.

John Beuttler – When we originally spent money on access, we were pressurized. We had to spend the money within a certain amount of time. We thought that if we spent money in the beginning on access projects then we would not need to spend money on other access projects in the future. We found those projects and we thought that would be the end of it.

Jim Edgar – I can understand the decision, even though I do not agree with it. The thing that worries me most is where the money is spent in relation to the problems with the Delta. It is a little like rearranging the deck chairs on the sinking titanic. The biggest concern is that this money needs to be spent on the highest priority problems that face the Delta fisheries. The salmon acclimation project does this. There is not much else on the horizon that deals with the

problems in the Delta.

Terry Foreman – The way we did this in the past, we will get better results if we go through an RFP. We need to give you ideas on what we want to spend the money on. We need to identify some of the things that we need to do.

John Beuttler – Jim should draft a letter on his thoughts and the Committee will consider sending it to the Director. We are missing the boat here! We need to focus on things that solve the problem so that access makes sense.

Heather McIntire – Would you like a Motion to recommend to the Department not to pursue access projects?

Committee – Yes.

MOTION: ____ motioned not to pursue additional access projects.

Seconded: John Ryzanych

The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

Halibut Research Proposals

You asked us to talk with our halibut heads Paul Reily, Kathy Hieb, Steve Wertz. This is what they wanted.

- Capture-mark-recapture study: identify halibut movement within and outside the bay
- Identify polymorphic loci within the halibut genome: groundwork to identify stock differences between north and south
- Halibut genetics: develop markers to distinguish between male and female fish
- Rearing temperatures changes the sex ratio
- Fecundity at length Gonadal Somatic Index
- Toxic material deposition
- Determine origin through otolith sampling

John Beuttler – We used to have a really good halibut fishery and now it is in decline. Some of these things I can say would be nice to include but how would any of these things help us get better halibut fishing in the Bay? How are we going to bring back the halibut fishery was like it was 10 year ago?

Ken Jones – Halibut population abundance is based on water temperature. Could these halibut be reared in S.F. Bay?

Terry Foreman – What they want to know is whether or not they should be reared.

John Beuttler – They've all seen it declining. This would be nice to include in our understanding of halibut. We need an approach to improve the halibut fishery.

Bob Strickland – Find out what it would take to grow halibut.

Brian Forest – Digging into the research, El Nino is not enough for dispersal of larvae. There needs to be an additional level of gravitational flow to bring the fish into the Bay. There has generally been seen a 20 year cycle. We need a determination between southern and northern stocks. Temperatures too high or too low will cause fish to become males. Lack of tidal flow would impact the ability of larvae to find good nursery areas.

Habitat limitation is not an issue and considering the fluctuations in recruitment it seems as though there is plenty of nursery habitat. This changes the need for additional research. We need to work with Northern California stocks. There are at least two in the Southern California Bight. If that is true then we will likely have different stocks here. This might cause issues with sex determination. Halibut have a weak X chromosome and it breaks or becomes dysfunctional. You might have lower reproduction due to this.

John Beuttler – Working with Northern California stocks is the way to go to alleviate sex determination concerns?

Jim Edgar – Is there a problem and what is it? Then seek solutions to that problem. This is fascinating research, but I would like to see a connection to the problem.

Ken Jones – It might be to our advantage to have increase populations to shift fishing pressure.

Jim Edgar – What do we do to double the population in the Bay-Delta? That would be interesting thing to see.

Terry Foreman – What can we do to improve the fishing for halibut? What I mean by fishing is CPUE. Things like that. Enhance the fishing.

Jim Edgar – I would like to see a proposal that made clear what the objective was that would strengthen or improve the fishery. I need this connection to support any research.

This money is to enhance sport fish; however, the primary research on sport species, the more you know the better of you are. Even things like largemouth bass where it is well understood on the east coast, but that is not the same here.

New Business

John Beuttler – When do we look at the things that are handed out under the action log? If material is going to be handed out at the meeting, we need to address it at the next meeting as an agenda item. Review budget, leg report, and Marty's green sturgeon abundance write-up, should be put on the next agenda.

Jim Crenshaw – Last June, 10 or 15 green sturgeon were lost at Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD). How were these losses mitigated? Are green sturgeon on the state ESA list? Is the abundance estimate really that low and, if so, do we need to go to the Fish and Game Commission?

 ACTION ITEM: The Department will find out how losses of green sturgeon at RBDD are mitigated and report back to the Committee.

Next Meeting

At this time, the next regular business meeting is scheduled to be on February 6, 2008 at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area.